

PLATE XXVI.—QUEEN ELIZABETH'S OAK.

This tree with all its peculiar features, and interesting tradition, is so well described by the Reverend Charles Davy, Rector of Onchouse in Suffolk, whose lines are quoted in the preceding article, that little apology will be necessary for inserting the account of it, in his own words.

"The Queen's Oak at Huntingfield (in Suffolk) was situated in a park of the Lord Hunsdon, about two bow-shots from the old mansion-house, where Queen Elizabeth is said to have been entertained by this nobleman, and to have enjoyed the pleasures of the chase in a kind of rural majesty. The approach to it was by a bridge, over an arm of the river Blythe, and, if I remember right, through three square courts. A gallery was continued the whole length of the building, which opening upon a balcony over the porch, gave an air of grandeur with some variety to the front. The great hall was built round six straight massy oaks, which originally supported the roof as they grew: upon these the foresters and yeomen of the guard used to hang their nets, cross-bows, hunting-poles, great saddles, calivers, bills, &c. The roots of them had been long decayed, when I visited this romantic dwelling; and the shafts sawn off at bottom were supported either by irregular logs of wood driven under them, or by masonry. Part of the long gallery, where the queen and her fair attendants used to divert themselves, was converted into an immense cheese-chamber; and upon my first looking into it, in the dusk of a summer's evening, when a number of these huge circular things were scattered upon the floor, it struck me that the maids of honour had just slipped off their fardingales to prepare for a general romping.

"Elizabeth is reported to have been much pleased with the retirement of this park, which was filled with tall and massy timbers, and to have been particularly amused and entertained with the solemnity of its walks and bowers; but this Oak, from which, the tradition is that she shot a buck with her own hand, was her favorite tree; it is still in some degree of vigour, though most of its boughs are broken off, and those which remain are approaching to a total decay, as well as its vast trunk; the principal arm, *now bald with dry antiquity*, shoots up to a great height above the leafage, and being hollow and truncated at top, with several cracks resembling loop-holes, through which the light shines into its cavity, it gives us an idea of the winding staircase in a lofty Gothic turret, which, detached from the ruins of some venerable pile, hangs tottering to its fall, and affects the mind of a beholder after the same manner by its greatness and sublimity."—*Davy's Letters*, Vol. I. p. 239.

This account was written about the year 1773. The principal arm, which is so accurately described in it, has suffered much since that time. The upper part of it is considerably shortened, probably having been brought to the ground by some of the many winter gales which have been weathered by the parent stem. The tree is nevertheless, from the associations connected with it, one of the most interesting objects in the park of Lord Huntingfield, whose property it is.

It measures thirty-four feet in girth, at five feet from the ground; Mr. Davy imagines it to have been five or six hundred years old, at the time he saw it, and its present appearance is sufficiently venerable to bear out the conjecture.

PLATE XXVII.—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S OAK.

This beautiful estate of Penshurst, on which this tree stands, may be deemed classic ground in every part, as the ancient property of the Sidneys, one of the most illustrious families of which England can boast. The tree itself has a more particular claim on our veneration, having been planted at the birth of Sir Philip Sidney; a name dear alike to valour and the muses, consecrated by every virtue that could adorn private life, and graced with talents that rendered their possessor the admiration of Europe, even in his bloom of youth. Every memorial of a birth so auspicious, every remembrance of a career bright, though, alas! brief

"as the lightning in the coiled night,"

is of value to the poet. Hence this oak has been celebrated by many of our best writers. Ben Jonson speaks of it as,

"That taller tree which of a nut was set
At his great birth where all the muses met."